



December 31, 2021

Dear Parents / Guardians:

I hope you all enjoyed a blessed Christmas and a safe and restful holiday. As we prepare to usher in 2022 and welcome students back to school, I want to provide you with some key details that will affect you and/or your child(ren). As you may know, yesterday afternoon, the province of Ontario made some important announcements about COVID-19, some of which are outlined below.

Delay in Reopening All Elementary and Secondary Schools

Yesterday, the province announced that elementary and secondary schools will re-open to students on **Wednesday, January 5, 2022**, not next Monday as originally intended. The delay in reopening is intended to provide school boards with additional time to put extra health and safety measures in place for everyone.

Reminders About, and Changes to, Health and Safety Protocols

The Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board already has a number of health and safety protocols in place, which will continue until further notice. These are:

- **Masking** – All students in Grades 1 – 12 who do not have a medical exemption are required to wear either a cloth or medical mask at school. Kindergarten students are strongly encouraged to wear masks as well. Masks must cover the nose and chin and should fit snugly. In addition, all board employees are required to wear either medical masks or non-fitted N95 masks while at school. On December 22, 2022, our board placed an order for N95 masks for employees and three-ply cloth masks for elementary and secondary students; these masks will be distributed when they arrive and/or as soon as is practicable.

- **Screening** – All students and employees are required to complete and submit a confirmation of self-screening each day before entering their schools and workplaces. The province’s self-screening tool is available at <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/> and will be updated with the latest provincial guidance within the next week.

In our board, daily confirmation of screening for elementary students should be submitted to <https://elem-screening.hscdsb.on.ca/>. Secondary student confirmations, which may be completed using a mobile device, should be submitted to screening.hscdsb.on.ca. Logins are required for both sites.

- **Rapid Antigen and PCR Testing Kits** – Before the Christmas holidays began, all students attending school in person were offered a rapid antigen test kit. It is strongly recommended that all students complete a rapid antigen test before re-entering school. Subject to availability through the province’s supply chain, PCR self-collection kits will also remain available to students and employees who exhibit symptoms most commonly associated with COVID-19. For more information about Ontario’s most recent testing and isolation requirements, please visit <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1001386/ontario-updating-public-health-measures-and-guidance-in-response-to-omicron>.
- **Continued Pause of High-Contact and High-Intensity Activities** – Based on medical advice obtained in late November from our local health unit, the board paused all high-contact and high-intensity extracurricular activities, such as basketball and multi-cohort choirs. Based on the province’s most recent direction, this pause in high-contact and high-intensity activities will continue.
- **Cohorting of Elementary Students at Recess Time** – Elementary students will continue to be cohorted at recess times, in accordance with public health guidance.

Transitioning Between In-Person and Virtual Learning

Ensuring that your child(ren) have access to safe, high-quality Catholic education is one of our board’s greatest priorities. We respect the fact that, notwithstanding the many health and safety protocols outlined previously, you might feel uneasy about sending your child(ren) back into an in-person learning environment.

The Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board will thus be offering the opportunity to transition your child between in-person and virtual learning for the remainder of the 2021-22 school year. The deadline for indicating your desire to transition your child(ren) is **Tuesday, January 18, 2022**. The actual transition date is **Monday, February 7, 2022**.

If you simply wish to have your child(ren) learn from home for a short period of time (e.g., a week or two), please contact your local school to make arrangements, beginning Monday, January 3, 2022.

- **Students Currently Enrolled in Virtual Learning** - If your child(ren) are currently enrolled in Holy Trinity Virtual Academy and you wish to have them remain there until the end of the 2021-22 school year, there is nothing more you need to do. Your virtual instruction will continue.

If your child(ren) are currently enrolled in Holy Trinity Virtual Academy and you wish to have them start in-person learning on Monday, February 7 at a physical school, please contact Principal Kristen Coulter or Vice-Principal Andrea Greco at 705-945-5622 or elementaryvirtual.school@hscdsb.on.ca by **Tuesday, January 18**.

- **Students Currently Enrolled in In-Person Learning** - If your child(ren) are currently enrolled in in-person learning at a local school and you wish to have them remain learning in person until the end of June 2022, there is nothing more you need to do. Your in-person instruction will continue.

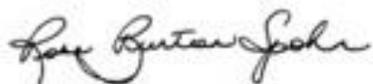
If your child(ren) are currently enrolled in in-person learning at a local school and you wish to have them transition to Holy Trinity Virtual Academy on Monday, February 7, please contact your local principal or vice-principal by **Tuesday, January 18** to ensure appropriate arrangements are made.

We recognize it might be difficult to make a commitment when health conditions are so unpredictable. If you feel unable to make this decision by the January 18 deadline and you express a desire to transition after that date, we will add your name to a wait list and try our best to accommodate you. However, please understand we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

In closing, please accept our board's appreciation for your continued cooperation and support. We urge all of you to continue to observe all public health measures.

Your ongoing adherence to public health advice, commitment to the common good, and prayers for everyone's safety are greatly appreciated.

Inviting you to rebuild, restore, and renew together,



Rose Burton Spohn
Director of Education

